



**EXCELSIA
COLLEGE**
Sydney - Australia

Document Name

VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

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Purpose and Scope

Excelsia College publishes minimum qualifications for both lecturers and students. Minimum qualifications for student admission are published in the course information book/website for each course. Minimum lecturing qualifications are published in the accreditation documentation for each course.

This policy sets out Excelsia College's approach to ascertaining the veracity of qualifications submitted by applicants for lecturing positions or student places in the College's courses.

Policy

1. Students

Applications for study at Excelsia College must include original or certified copies of transcripts of completed study relevant to the application and, where applicable, original or certified copies of evidence of English language proficiency. This evidence must be sighted by the Registrar and a copy kept in the student's file. Where any question of authenticity or detail arises, the Registrar will research the qualifications and, if necessary, contact the issuing authority. If such research leads the Registrar to conclude that an applicant has falsified qualifications, or any other documents used to assess their admission, their offer of a place in the course will normally be withdrawn, or their enrolment discontinued, and/or any grades already awarded in the course rescinded.

2. Academic Staff

At the time of accepting an offer of a lecturing position, academic staff must submit original or certified copies of their qualifications as cited in the curriculum vitae. These documents providing evidence of qualifications are a necessary part of the appointment process, and a copy must be held in the lecturer's file. This policy outlines arrangements to ensure the qualifications and required professional memberships/certifications/accreditations claimed by existing and prospective staff members are verified and collected.

Guidelines

AEI-NOOSR has set out the following guidelines for verifying educational qualifications and related documents.¹

"In relation to education, fraud could be described as dishonestly obtaining a benefit or advantage from an educational institution, by deceit or other dishonest conduct through altering authentic documents or making/using forged or falsified documents. Fraudulent documentation can include:

- degrees and other qualification documents
- transcripts
- accreditation statements or claims
- examination or testing results
- letters or statements from institutions/academics/professional bodies.

"The most common types of document fraud are:

- **Altered documents** – official, legitimate documents which have been altered, usually by omissions, additions or changes. Legitimate documents usually include pre-printed information about the qualification on the document itself and printed or handwritten information about the individual. Alterations can occur in either area.
- **Counterfeit or fabricated documents** – documents which have been fabricated to represent official documents from real or non-existent institutions.
- **Internal fraud** – fraudulent documents which have been produced by a legitimate employee of an institution, usually for a fee. Such documents usually use official document paper or letterheads. Detection usually requires institutional/government support and cooperation.

¹ AEI-NOOSR 2006, 'Fraudulent Documentation', Professional Development Workshop, Assessing Overseas Qualifications, November

- **Distorted ‘translations’** – documents purporting to be accurate translations of legitimate or fraudulent foreign language documents. Such translations are not just inaccurate but set out to deliberately mislead or deceive. The translation presumes that the receiving party cannot read the foreign language, or has little knowledge of the education system.
- **‘Degree Mills’ and ‘Accreditation Mills’** – While the documents may not necessarily be fabrications, the academic study they purport to represent is.

“Visible Signs of Possible Fraud

- Typefaces that vary on machine-printed documents.
- Different typefaces in inserted information.
- Variations in handwriting in inserted information.
- Spelling mistakes, incorrect diacritical marks.
- Presence of overwriting, erasures, correction fluid, burn marks.
- Off-centred or reglued photographs.
- Unusually high grades.
- Weak or fuzzy or inappropriate seals, official stamps or signatures.

“Incorrect or Inconsistent Information

Fraud need not be tied to the appearance of the documents. Rapid advances in technology are making the detection of fraud more difficult. Signs that a document may be fraudulent include:

- inconsistent information across the package of submitted documents or between the information on the application form and the attached documents;
- inaccurate or incorrect information about a legitimate institution or qualification;
- incorrect information about an institution or program, e.g. not accredited at the time or not offered at the time.”

Procedure

In order to minimise the risk of fraud in relation to academic qualifications, Excelsia College:

1. insists that required academic documents be submitted in original or certified copy.
2. where documents are in a foreign language, insists on official translations from the country’s translation services or NAATI translators.
3. provides in-service training for assessing staff.
4. uses published directories to verify details of institutions and courses.
5. uses AEI-NOOSR’s *Country Education Profiles Online* to develop knowledge about education systems and qualification requirements.

References and Related Documents

PO-STU-08 Student Selection and Admission Policy and Procedure

PO-STA-24 Recruitment of Permanent Staff Policy and Procedure

PO-STA-26 Recruitment of Casual and Contract Academic Staff Policy and Procedure

WP-STA-02A Recruitment of Casual and Contract Academic Staff Process Flowchart

STA-G19 Appointment of Casual and Contract Academic Staff Eligibility Criteria Checklist